

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

CABINET

DATE: 24 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS

**LEAD OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
CHILDREN'S AND CULTURAL
SERVICES**

SUBJECT: SECONDARY SCHOOL PRIORITIES

WARDS: ALL

**KEY DECISION? YES
IF YES, IN FORWARD PLAN? YES**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval, subject to the statutory consultation and approval process, of the strategy to meet secondary school priorities, including proposals to provide sufficient high quality secondary school places to meet forecast demand and to establish school sixth forms, within the borough.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The report outlines the strategy and the proposals within it.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet approves the proposals, subject to the subsequent statutory consultation and approval process.

3. DETAILS

- 3.1 This report builds upon education priorities within the Corporate Plan, and refines the strategy outlined within the 'Education "White" Paper: provision of high quality places in education' agreed by Cabinet on 6 December 2010. It covers the provision of places, the establishment of a Catholic school, the establishment of sixth forms, and the conversion of schools to academy status.

3.2 Secondary school places

- 3.2.1 Despite the 25% increase in live births per year between 2000 and 2010, there has traditionally been, and still is, considerable spare capacity in the secondary school provision within the borough, with, as at 17 October 2011, 209 spare

places in Year 7 across the borough. Unlike at primary level, where almost all the state-maintained schools in the borough are highly successful and therefore very popular, at secondary level it may take longer than had previously been envisaged for the positive changes at the three academies to translate into oversubscription. For that and other reasons (including the possible establishment of free schools; and the establishment of a eight-form entry secondary school in north Kingston in 2015, which would free up 100+ places at Grey Court and Christ's for Richmond Borough children), it is probable that the increased demand in the primary sector will not lead to capacity being exceeded until beyond 2016 at the earliest, if at all.

- 3.2.2 It is also the case that the first batches of families whose children would miss out if the academies became oversubscribed would be those living furthest away, i.e. well outside the borough, so there would be a degree of cushioning – probably a further 100+ places – for in-borough residents. In addition, the proposed establishment by the Diocese of Westminster (see paragraph 3.3 below) of a Catholic secondary school in 2013 would release some places at the eight schools, most notably at Christ's, which has traditionally admitted a number of Catholic children under its 'Foundation' category.
- 3.2.3 Within that context, the increases in size at the three academies could safely be reversed down to 180 each for September 2013 entry in order to accommodate sixth forms (see paragraph 3.5 below). It has also been agreed that from 2012 entry onwards, the temporary increase in Grey Court's admission number between 2009 and 2011 should be reversed down to its normal 200.
- 3.2.4 Christ's would like to increase its intake by one form of entry if investment in adequate buildings were available, and to do so would make more viable the school's budgetary position and ability to compete with other schools. It is proposed that this should be from September 2013.
- 3.2.5 The capacity of the other schools is likely to remain as at present, i.e. Orleans Park and Waldegrave would admit 200 pupils per year and Teddington would admit 240.
- 3.2.6 Although demand is expected to increase towards capacity by 2016, it is not forecast to exceed it at that point. At this stage, it is difficult to envisage when, if at all, demand will exceed capacity. As the educational landscape is fast-changing, particularly in regard to free schools, many possible developments could take place over the next few years and it is therefore difficult to forecast demand for secondary school places as accurately as is the case at primary level.

3.3 **Catholic secondary school**

The proposed establishment of a Catholic secondary school would be subject to consultation and the statutory proposal process. The consultation will be considered in a future report to Cabinet.

3.4 **Free schools**

It is possible that the Secretary of State will approve one or more free school proposals that are likely to be submitted to him in March 2012, with a view to being implemented in September 2013. However, it would be imprudent of the Council to diminish its own plans for providing additional school places on the

presumption that any such submissions will be approved, given that there has so far been considerable nation-wide competition for free school funding.

3.5 Sixth forms

3.5.1 An online survey of school and college students, parents and other local people in March-May 2011 showed strong demand for sixth forms to be established in the secondary schools and academies within the borough: 87% of the 1,325 respondents indicated that they would like to see school sixth forms in the borough, whilst 10% indicated that they would not.

3.5.2 Since then, the borough's Sixth Forms Forum – consisting of: the principals of the eight schools and academies; the principals of the two further education colleges; senior elected members; and senior officers – has considered both an overarching feasibility report into the establishment of sixth forms and a more detailed report into the accommodation that would be required. As a result, the Forum has approved in-principle the proposal to establish sixth forms in the borough in September 2013.

3.5.3 Work to develop a viable and sustainable curriculum model is ongoing, and it is proposed that statutory proposals to establish the sixth forms should be published in the spring of 2012.

3.6 Academies

3.6.1 The governing bodies of four (Christ's, Grey Court, Teddington and Waldegrave) of the five non-academy secondary schools in the borough decided in July 2011 to apply to convert to academy status on 1 April 2012. The governing body of Orleans Park likewise decided on 14 September to convert. All five schools subsequently undertook statutory consultation with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders between 19 September and 21 October.

3.6.2 Due diligence work is taking place in autumn 2011 with a view to the schools' governing bodies being in a position to make their final decisions in January 2012.

3.6.3 The TUPE consultation, led by the Council's Human Resources Department, with staff would follow in February and March.

3.6.4 The Secretary of State would then make his decision in March as to whether to approve the applications.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation on the individual proposals outlined within this report has been carried out with the headteachers and governing bodies of the schools concerned.

4.2 Prior to the publication of statutory proposals, meetings have been, or will be, held with parents and local residents of each school concerned in order to address any concerns that they may have.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Costs associated with the proposals covered within this report are outlined within a separate report that was considered by Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 November 2011. Cabinet will be taking final decisions on a revised overall capital programme for the Council in February 2012.
- 5.2 The costs of schools' due diligence and legal work in preparation for conversion to academy status will be met through Department for Education grants of £25,000 per school.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 This report addresses key Council education priorities, as outlined in the Corporate Plan, and the Education "White" Paper, 'Choice and diversity: putting policy into practice', that Cabinet approved on 6 December 2010.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 If the Council does not approve the proposals, it will not be able to fulfil its statutory duties to ensure sufficient educational provision in the borough in the 11-16 phase; and will not be able to fulfil its Corporate Plan pledge to promote school sixth forms within the borough.
- 7.2 The separate report to Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified significant additional demand on capital funding, a large part of which relates to secondary and sixth form provision. The Council will be continuing to seek different sources of funding, including resources from Government, to ensure the overall programme remains affordable within the Council's wider Council Tax Strategy.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT / CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The provision of additional school places will meet the Local Authority's statutory duty and the wishes of all residents who would like their children to be educated in Richmond upon Thames borough schools. The provision of high quality school places is a key focus in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 8.2 An equalities impact needs assessment (EINA) was undertaken in December 2007 on the authority's school place planning policy and procedures, and updated in December 2009.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council has a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that sufficient schools are available for their area for providing primary and secondary education.
- 9.2 Under Sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the ASCL Act 2009), the Council has a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in the borough.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 As a design tool and a method of measurement, the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) will be used to determine the exact level of environmental performance of any new building that is required to implement the proposals included within this report.
- 10.2 Providing additional school places enables children to access school places within a 'walkable' distance from their homes, rather than having to travel by car or bus to schools further afield.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Corporate Plan](#)

[Report to Cabinet 6 December 2010.](#)

[Education and Inspections Act 2006.](#)

[DCSF guidance on 'Expanding a Maintained Mainstream School or Adding a Sixth Form'.](#)

[The School Organisation \(Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools\) \(England\) Regulations 2007.](#)

12. CONTACTS

Councillor Paul Hodgins, Cabinet Member for Schools

Email: Cllr.PHodgins@richmond.gov.uk:

Nick Whitfield, Director of Education, Children's and Cultural Services

Email: nick.whitfield@richmond.gov.uk, 020 8891 7507;

Matthew Paul, Head of Schools Commissioning

Email: m.paul@richmond.gov.uk, 020 8891 7588.